

## Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 DAMASC 01327 080849Z POSS DUPE  
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W  
-----013971 081550Z /43  
R 080807Z MAR 78  
FM AMEMBASSY DAMASCUS  
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7136

C O N F I D E N T I A L DAMASCUS 1327

EXDIS

NEA FOR ATHERTON, INR FOR SAUNDERS

E.O. 11652: GDS  
TAGS: PEPR SY US  
SUBJECT: HIGH LEVEL SYRO-US CONTACT.

1. DURING MARCH 5 MEETING WITH KHADDAM (DAMASCUS 1295), I NOTED THAT SAUNDERS WOULD TAKE OVER AS NEA ASSISTANT SECRETARY PERHAPS IN APRIL AND, SPEAKING PERSONALLY, I THOUGHT IT LIKELY THAT SAUNDERS MIGHT WISH TO TOUR AREA ONCE INSTALLED AS ASSISTANT SECRETARY. KHADDAM RECALLED PAST CONTACT WITH SAUNDERS AND PRAISED HRL. FONMIN GAVE NO INDICATION THAT HIS VISIT WOULD CAUSE DIFFICULTIES FOR SYRIANS.

2. SHOULD A HIGH LEVEL CONTACT, BELOW THAT OF THE SECRETARY, WITH WASHINGTON BE CONSIDERED DESIRABLE IN NEXT SEVERAL WEEKS, A VISIT BY SAUNDERS WOULD SEEM THE MOST PRACTICABLE ONE TO ARRANGE. I AM NOT OPTIMISTIC THAT SYRIANS WILL BE ABLE TO FIND A WAY OUT OF THE CORNER INTO WHICH THEY HAVE PAINTED THEMSELVES BY LEAKING THEIR POSITION TO THE PRESS ABOUT AN ATHERTON VISIT. SHOULD SAUNDERS COME, SUGGEST, CONSIDERATION BE GIVEN TO HIS INCLUDING ON ITIMORARY ARAB CAPITALS OTHER THAN  
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CONFRONTATION STATES AS WELL AS DAMASCUS.

3. INCIDENTALLY, TO UNDERLINE FACT THAT REFUSAL TO RECEIVE ATHERTON WAS SOLELY BECAUSE OF LATTER'S SPECIAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CURRENT NEGOTIATIONS BUILDING ON THE SADAT INITIATIVE, PRIMIN KHULAYFAWI'S WIFE HAPPILY RECEIVED MRS. ATHERTON AND MY WIFE FOR

COURTESY CALL MARCH 6. (CALL HAD BEEN REQUESTED FOR  
MRS. MURPHY BEFORE WE KNEW MRS. ATHERTON WOULD BE IN DAMASCUS.  
WE TOOK PRECAUTION OF CHECKING WITH PRIMINISTRY BEFORE CALL  
THAT MRS. ATHERTON WOULD ALSO BE WELCOME.) HAD  
MRS. KHADDAM NOT BEEN OUT OF COUNTRY UNTIL LATE ON  
MARCH 6, MRS."ATHERTON WOULD ALSO HAVE CALLED ON HER.  
KHADDAM HAD HIS OFFICE TELEPHONE ME TO ASK IF MRS. ATHERTON  
COULD DELAY HER DEPARTURE FOR JERUSALEM SO THAT SHE  
AND MRS. KHADDAM COULD MEET FOLLOWING DAY. THIS WAS NOT  
POSSIBLE AND I PASSED APPROPRIATE REGRETS TO KHADDAM.  
MURPHY

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## Message Attributes

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**Capture Date:** 01 jan 1994  
**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
**Concepts:** FOREIGN RELATIONS  
**Control Number:** n/a  
**Copy:** SINGLE  
**Draft Date:** 08 mar 1978  
**Decaption Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Decaption Note:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Action:** RELEASED  
**Disposition Approved on Date:**  
**Disposition Case Number:** n/a  
**Disposition Comment:** 25 YEAR REVIEW  
**Disposition Date:** 20 Mar 2014  
**Disposition Event:**  
**Disposition History:** n/a  
**Disposition Reason:**  
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**Errors:** N/A  
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**Review Markings:**  
Sheryl P. Walter  
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